

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SB 5974

---

---

C 347 L 09  
Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Regarding live nonambulatory livestock.

**Sponsors:** Senators Morton, Hatfield, Swecker, Marr and Shin.

**Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development**  
**House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources**

**Background:** In December 2003 one cow imported from Canada was found in Washington State to have bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). BSE, also known as Mad Cow Disease, exhibits a behavior in cattle where the use of, particularly, the hind legs becomes impaired. There are other maladies and injuries that can affect livestock that are expressed by this similar behavior.

During the following session in 2004, legislation was enacted that made knowingly transporting nonambulatory livestock a gross misdemeanor. This provision was inserted into the state animal cruelty laws. Under this statute, the county prosecutor is required to bring an action.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has personnel at or near livestock markets and similar facilities.

**Summary:** It is a civil infraction to knowingly transport or accept delivery of live nonambulatory livestock to, from, or between any livestock market, feedlot, slaughter facility, or similar facility that trades in livestock. Violators may be assessed a monetary penalty not to exceed \$1,000. Livestock that was ambulatory prior to transport to a feedlot that become nonambulatory because of an injury may be unloaded and placed in a separate pen for rehabilitation. WSDA has authority to impose the monetary penalty.

Persons not cited for a civil infraction by WSDA may still be criminally prosecuted.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	49	0	
House	96	2	(House amended)
Senate	45	0	(Senate concurred)

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Effective:** July 26, 2009